

SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Plymstock School we continue to explore ways to effectively communicate with our students, parents/carers and wider community to ensure that we are working together towards our vision of achieving excellence through curriculum and culture. Safeguarding our students is our number one priority and we were delighted in our recent Ofsted inspection that our safeguarding arrangements are effective. The report went on further to say that leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils receive the right support at the right time. They work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils' emotional and physical safety is protected. Leaders and staff are meticulous in the recording of safeguarding concerns.

Whilst we are delighted with this outcome, we are aware that you can never be complacent with safeguarding arrangements. To further support our work around keeping children safe, we wanted to reach out and try and establish ways to help and support our parents/carers. Our new 'safeguarding matters' half termly newsletter will provide the opportunity for my team and I to share current topics and themes that children and young people may be at risk of harm from. We will share how we as a school are endeavouring to raise awareness and educate the students around these issues and at the same time provide parents/carers with useful information and where to access additional support.

I would like to thank you for your continued support of Plymstock School.

Kind regards

Mr Joe Ellerton, Designated Safeguarding Lead

MEET the Team

Safeguarding is led at Plymstock School by Mr Joe Ellerton who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). He is then supported by two deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, Miss Claire Offer who specialises in attendance and Mrs Sophie Harris who supports in leading mental health support for students in school.

Each year group is led by a Year Team Leader and Pastoral Manager who both have safeguarding training and maintain the status of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. These members of staff would usually be your first point of call for any safeguarding and pastoral concerns. We work closely as a team and all safeguarding concerns are overseen by the DSL and his deputies but in many cases the head of year team will have communication about decisions and actions with families.



Mr A Yendell
Headteacher



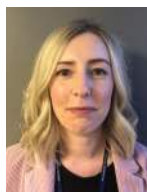
Mrs S Harris
Deputy DSL
(Welfare)



Joseph Ellerton
Designated Safeguarding Lead &
Senior Mental Health Lead



Miss C Offer
Deputy DSL
(Attendance)



Mrs S Smith
Year 7 Team Leader



Mr P Chivers
Year 8 Pastoral
Manager



Miss S Holton
Year 9 Pastoral
Manager



Miss V Palin
Year 10 Pastoral
Manager



Mrs K Davis
Year 11 Pastoral
Manager

Culture of Inclusion - Discrimination

Home Office statistics note that hate crime has risen within the UK and that latest data shows a 10% rise year on year over the last five years. Specific events such as the EU referendum have also led to an increase in hate crimes with Home Office Statistics suggesting that this led to just under a 50% increase in the number of racially and religiously motivated hate crimes.

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, which are linked to 'protected characteristics'. These include disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity. The behaviours where one or a group of individuals have targeted another individual based on aspects of their identity constitute child on child abuse and are also considered Hate Crimes.

The Crown Prosecution Service definition for Hate Crime is:

'Hate Crime can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity. A hate crime can include verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault and bullying, as well as damage to property.'

Plymstock School is committed to being a truly inclusive school community. Through our Personal Development curriculum, Forensic Reading programme, tutor and assembly programme, we plan opportunities for students to learn about different forms of discrimination, the impact any form of discrimination has on individuals and groups and the extent to which these behaviours and attitudes should not be tolerated by anyone within our society.

We are really proud and excited to have been given the opportunity to work in collaboration with the Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council who will be working with our school community to launch an extended pilot project centred on Diversity and Inclusion during the summer term.

This project will involve school staff, parents/carers and young people with lived experience of discrimination along with whole school intervention.

This project aims to:

- Gather views and experiences of minoritised communities who attend Plymstock School
- Explore what support and strategies that could be developed within school to tackle racism
- Educate about hate crimes/hate incidents and the impact and the consequences
- look at practical ways to challenge behaviour and comments
- look at ways that young people perpetrating racist behaviour can be challenged and supported to understand the impact in a restorative approach

We look forward to updating you on how the project is going and the impact it is having within our school community and beyond

Culture of Inclusion - LGBTQ+

Pride Month is held throughout June and it's a vibrant and inclusive celebration that honors the LGBTQ+ community, their history, achievements, and ongoing struggle for equality. This annual event serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of inclusion, equality and diversity.

Plymstock School has been working in collaboration with the Intercom Trust based in Plymouth to provide a weekly LGBTQ+ Club and we are proud to be working towards our Rainbow Flag Award. This is a quality assurance framework with a focus on positive LGBT+ inclusion, for all schools and colleges.

Please visit <https://www.intercomtrust.org.uk/> for more information, advice and guidance.

Vaping

We have recently seen in the media a spotlight being placed on the growing concerns around the increase of the number of children and young people vaping, and the potential impact this is having on them. There have also been concerns raised by Headteachers from school across the UK regarding vaping being an issue within their school and wider communities.

Within our school community we have made it very clear to all students that vaping will not be tolerated. Any form of tobacco and cigarette papers/e-cigarettes/vapes and vape liquids is a prohibited item. Any individual that is found in possession of these items will have them confiscated and sanctions will be applied, as per our behaviour policy.

In conjunction with this, it is also important for us to be offering education to young people and parents/carers about the risks associated with vaping. Recently, Professor Chris Whitty commented on the potential 'health crisis' surrounding the number of children vaping in the UK and told MPs that vaping was an 'addictive product' with 'unknown consequences for developing minds'.

We work in collaboration with an organisation called SHARP, which is a Plymouth based organisation who help and support people up to the age of 18 who may be experiencing or are at risk of experiencing harm as a consequence of substance misuse. We make referrals ourselves but you as parent/carers can contact SHARP to seek advice, guidance and make referrals.

They provide the following support:

- Advice and information on reducing harm from substance use
- Help to stop, or reduce, substance use
- Prescribing, if appropriate
- Support to access other services
- Working with families
- Multi-agency working
- Time limited tailored and holistic interventions
- Sexual health support and advice
- Consultation for professionals
- Training on using Drug Use Screening Tool (DUST)

They can be contacted on 01752 434295 or you can visit their website at www.harbour.org.uk.

Our Designated Safeguard Lead is currently engaging with the Department for Health to explore and develop strategies moving forwards. This will include assemblies sharing information regarding the risks associated with vaping along with providing weekly sessions where students can access and speak to professionals who work for SHARP.

It is important that parent/carers also engage with their children regarding the issue of vaping. This is something where we are seeing more and more children drawn into doing due to the way in which vaping is often seen as the latest thing to do, the way in which vaping is being marketed to young people, and that children say they find the flavouring appealing.

Advice on things that can be done at home....

- Talk openly with your teen about E-cigarettes
- Know the facts.
- Be patient and ready to listen.
- Try not to deliver a lecture.
- Set a positive example by being tobacco-free.
- Find the right moment.
- Ask for support.

Answers to the question 'why don't you want me to vape?;

- Science shows that e-cigarettes contain ingredients that are addictive and could harm different parts of your body.
- Right now, your brain is still developing, which means you are more vulnerable to addiction. Many e-cigarettes contain nicotine, and using nicotine can change your brain to make you crave more nicotine. It can also affect your memory and concentration. I don't want that for you!
- E-cigarettes contain chemicals that are harmful. When people use e-cigarettes, they breathe in tiny particles that can harm their lungs.